

Nominees sought to fill MBC positions

The 2015 Committee on Nominations approved by messengers of the 179th annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in October 2014 will soon begin reviewing the trustee/board member positions on the boards and commissions of the Mississippi Baptist Convention to serve in 2016.

According to Danny Smith, committee chairman and pastor of First Church, Tunica, there are a limited number of vacancies to be filled on the following boards and commissions:

- Baptist Children's Village
- Baptist Health Systems, Inc. (Jackson)
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc. (Memphis)
- Board of Ministerial Education
- Education Commission
- Historical Commission
- Blue Mountain College
- Mississippi College
- William Carey University
- Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission, Inc.
- Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
- Mississippi Baptist Foundation

The Committee on Nominations will work with the heads of the institutions and agencies to bring a list of nominees to be approved by messengers of the 180th annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention on Oct. 27-28, at First Church, Jackson.

Completed forms should be mailed to the Committee on Nominations, Dr. Jim Futral, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530, to be received no later than May 1.

For nomination forms or for more information, contact Maria Teel in Executive Administration at (601) 292-3201 or toll-free (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: mteel@mbcb.org.

For more information

Contact Maria Teel in Executive Administration at (601) 292-3201 or toll-free (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: mteel@mbcb.org.



EXECUTING CHRISTIANS — Islamic terrorists identified as ISIS members prepare to behead 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians who were living and working in Syrian territory recently overrun by the Muslim extremists. A video of the mass murders from which this screen grab was taken was released on Feb. 15, but the date of the executions is unknown. (Photo attribution not available)

'Take necessary action now'

SBC presidents urge Obama to act against ISIS

NASHVILLE (BP) — Sixteen former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) presidents and the current president have called on U.S. President Barack Obama to "take the necessary actions now" against the Muslim ISIS terrorists rampaging across portions of the Middle East, murdering and enslaving Christians and other religious minorities.

In a March 1 open letter to Obama, the presidents wrote, "Since ISIS is a continuing threat to world peace in a way unknown to us since the Nazis of World War II, we humbly call upon you to use the influence and power of your distinguished office to take the necessary actions now in this urgent hour to bring an end to these human atrocities."

"The abuse, brutalization, and murder of children, women, and men that is occurring before the world calls our country to lead forward to bring this to an end."

The open letter comes in the wake of numerous reports of ISIS killings that include the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians, the death of an American aid worker, and a Jordanian pilot being burned alive.

ISIS captured more than 200 Assyrian Christians Feb. 23, CNN reported. Women, children, and elderly were among those taken captive during an ISIS attack on villages near Tal Tamer in northern Syria, according to the report.

On the inside

To read the unabridged letter and view the list of signatories, turn to pg. 5.

SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page, who served as SBC president from 2006-08, said in Nashville he is often asked about the ISIS threat. "People are frightened, people are concerned. We need [President Obama] to act and to act decisively," he said. "I join with the other SBC presidents in supporting our current [SBC] president's call to action."

Bryant Wright, SBC president from 2010-12, and pastor of Johnson Ferry Church in Marietta, Ga., described the letter as "a plea to the president to take a stronger leadership role" against ISIS.

"It will be important to join with Egypt and Jordan and others in that part of the world to show this is not just the defense of Christians but you're talking about religious liberty for all," said Wright. "...The government has been ordained by God to use its might, be it military might, police power, whatever it is to defend the citizens and to uphold justice and punish evil."

Wright is among a group of Christian ministers invited to Washington D.C. this week to hear Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speak at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference March 2.

During a report at the semi-annual SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville on Feb. 16, current SBC President Ronnie Floyd told Southern Baptist leaders they "must speak for those who are unable to speak up for themselves."

see ISIS on p. 5

LifeWay moving forward on sale

NASHVILLE (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources signed a letter of intent Feb. 23 with "a firm that represents a group of local and national developers," moving forward the Southern Baptist entity's goal of selling its 14.5-acre downtown Nashville complex.

A LifeWay statement issued by Marty King, director of corporate communications, noted that talks are ongoing "so it would be premature for us to discuss any elements of the negotiations or the businesses and individuals involved."

King could not confirm a story in the Nashville Business Journal reporting that the "potential purchase price could be as high as \$125 million, according to one source with knowledge of negotiations."

A letter of intent, according to a LifeWay explanation issued Feb. 24, is "a temporary legal arrangement allowing the seller and potential buyers time to concentrate their negotiations."

see LIFEWAY on p. 7

Inside this issue

Directions.....	4
Sunday School lessons...	7
Editorial.....	2
Biblioclip.....	6
How to E.....	6
a Christi.....	6
Revivals.....	5
Homecom.....	5
Just for t.....	4
Classific.....	6

MAR 13 2015



From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Checked at the door

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech...

— U.S. Constitution, First Amendment

The Founding Fathers believed freedom of religion and freedom of speech were so important to the people of the new nation that they enshrined them as the first two items in the Bill of Rights. Those protections have well served the country since their official ratification in 1792.

However, if you thought those protections still applied in our generation, you'd be wrong. At least, if you work for the City of Atlanta.

Mayor Kassim Reed fired nationally-respected Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran in January after Cochran dared to publicly express his opinion that homosexual behavior is immoral and quote applicable Bible verses, in a self-published book he wrote for struggling men that was personally distributed by Cochran and was never for sale.

According to Baptist Press, Cochran is a deacon, Sunday School teacher, and Bible study leader at Atlanta's Elizabeth Church, a church in cooperation with the Georgia Baptist Convention. In addition to serving twice as Atlanta's fire chief, he has also held the prestigious position of head of the U.S. Fire Administration, an agency of the federal government.

In 2012, Fire Chief magazine named Cochran their national "Fire Chief of the Year."

His unreleased book touched on homosexuality for less than half a page. Still, that was too much for avowed homosexual Atlanta City Councilman Alex Wan, who obtained a copy of Cochran's book and demanded the fire chief's employment be terminated.

"When you're a city employee and [your] thoughts, beliefs, and opinions are different from the city's, you have to check them at the door," Wan told the Atlanta Constitution-Journal newspaper.

That should be a startling statement to all of us, responded David Cortman, senior counsel for

Alliance Defending Freedom in Scottsdale, Az., which has filed a federal discrimination lawsuit on behalf of Cochran against Kassim and the city.

And so it begins. "It's a frightening day in the United States when a person cannot express their faith without fears of persecution following," said Robert White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention, in a Fox News interview. "It's persecution when a godly fire chief loses his job over expressing his Christian faith."

It's also a frightening day in the United States when elected leaders like Kassim and Wan can be so ignorant and cynical of this country's founding principles. White believes the mayor caved to political pressure applied by the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community. No doubt White is right about that, too.

Cochran apparently thought he could hold to his personal Christian principles while patterning his public conduct after his Savior's example. "The greatest of my Christian values is a love without condition for all humankind," he said. "In the fire service, I have had the privilege to live out this virtue every day for past 34 years to the extent that I would lay down my life for anyone in the communities in which I have served."

"The investigation shows that there is no evidence. Under no circumstances have I been discriminatory or hateful towards any member of the department in the LGBT community or a member of the LGBT community at large."

Doesn't matter, Chief. You no longer have rights to freedom of religion or speech, rights once accorded to every American. You must now "check them at the door" of hedonism, secularism, and political correctness.

"I'm just standing still to see the salvation of our God because He will show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are fully His," Cochran told the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee in a Dec. 9 address during his suspension without pay, "and my heart is fully His."

Amen, my brother. Amen.

Social media and the church

I've worked in social media on a church staff for nearly two years, and I'm having a lot of fun. The more time I spend with our staff and other churches, the more I get excited about the future.

Over these last two years, my opinions and assumptions have changed about social media. What hasn't changed is my belief that the church can be a force for good on social media. I think the church is in a position for God to use social networking for some amazing things. Here are some additional beliefs, opinions, and observations:

■ We need to stop tweeting that our worship band "rocks." Unless U2 is your worship band, I don't think it rocks. Saying your worship band rocks on Sunday morning has become cliché. I think we can stop doing that.

■ We can speak truth in love in national moments. We can be the voice of hope and truth when our world seems to be falling apart.

■ We shouldn't be negative. Pastors, if you don't like your sandwich at Subway, don't tweet about it. Why? Because there might be a chance that the kid working behind the counter at Subway goes to your church and will read the tweet.

One bad sandwich, airline flight, or customer service experience doesn't warrant airing your grievances online.

■ Being online doesn't mean you have to be everywhere. Don't feel comfortable being on Snapchat? Don't. Do you prefer Facebook over Twitter? Then use Facebook. Be online where you feel comfortable and where you'll think you'll succeed. Don't chase something that isn't you.

■ Tweeting Scripture isn't always a good idea. It can be an easy way to get likes or retweets, but does it make a lot of sense to post a Scripture then moments later post about a church event? Especially when the two aren't related?

If you're posting Scripture, make sure you provide context as well (e.g.



Guest opinion
with Darrel Girardier

the Scripture you're tweeting is tied to Sunday's sermon).

■ You can buy Facebook likes and Twitter followers, but you can't buy influence. Influence is earned, not bought. Always has been, always will be.

■ The church should take the lead on how to use social media. We should be the standard bearers of how to use social media. When someone asks, "How should I conduct myself online?" I hope they look at our church staff and see how to do it right.

■ The church shouldn't be afraid to try new platforms. We can't let fear of a new platform stop us from reaching people. Sure, people use Snapchat for the wrong reasons, but that doesn't mean you should shy away from reaching people there.

■ Don't argue online. No one wins and we all lose when we argue online.

■ Small is the new big. If you're a small church, I think you have an advantage on social media.

You can take your time to interact with your people online since you're dealing with a smaller congregation. Large churches may have more resources, but you can be quicker and nimble, which is a big advantage on social media.

Girardier is the digital strategy director for Brentwood Church in Brentwood, TN, where he oversees the team that handles the church's social media, Web, and mobile presence. He blogs at darrelgirardier.com and is @dgirardier on Twitter.

THE BaptistRecord

Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

Editor Emeritus
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Dwayne Parker, Flora Paul Sims, Pontotoc
Barry Burris, Terry Carl White, Meridian
Billie Buckley, Petal Russell, MDS, Sturgis

Postmaster:
Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org



VOLUME 139 • NUMBER 10 • ISSN-0005-5778
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$10.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

Baptists determined to reach Dearborn Muslims

DEARBORN, MI. (BP) — Southern Baptist pastor Carlos Liese recalls entering a mosque near Dearborn, Mi., sitting on the floor with Islamists, and sharing the Gospel. An elderly Muslim man who said little during the conversation invited Liese to his home.

Such encounters are not uncommon for Liese, who helps lead monthly evangelism efforts in Middle Eastern coffee shops, hookah bars, and restaurants in Dearborn, a city where at least a third of the population is Arab-American, according to U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 report, Arab Population in Selected Places, and a 2009 report from the Arab American Institute (AAI).

Many concede the U.S. Census undercounts Arab-Americans. To improve its count, the Census Bureau is considering adding a "Middle Eastern/North African" category to its racial and ethnic background question in the 2020 survey, AAI reported in November 2014.

Contrary to news reports dating to as early as 2010, Dearborn is not under Sharia law, a strict and sometimes tortuous theocratic form of civil and criminal law based on the Quran, said Southern Baptist pastors in the Detroit suburb of about 100,000 people.

Liese, who lives in Dearborn Heights and pastored First Spanish Church in Detroit for 25 years, called such reports "yellow journalism," aimed at riling people and increasing readers and viewers.

"Making statements like that only frighten people and that doesn't accomplish anything," said Liese, who today pastors Good Shepherd Church in Lansing, 60 miles away.

While Sharia varies in implementation in Islamic countries that impose it, common Sharia punishments include prison or death for criticizing the government, which is considered blasphemy; death by stoning for a woman who has a child out of wedlock, even in cases of rape; and jailing or caning for vagrancy, the crime of being intentionally unemployed and failing to care for one's family. (Source: Duhaime.org online law dictionary)

Regardless of rumors, 37% of Christians fear the establishment of Sharia law in the U.S., according to a September-October, 2014 poll by LifeWay Research, Baptist Press (BP) reported Feb. 11.

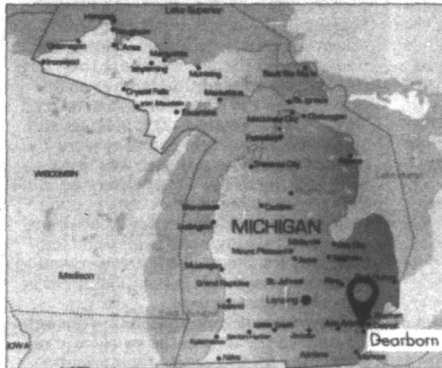
The rumors are so well established that Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly has refuted the claim in letters to individuals, appearances on international media, and in an Oct. 30, 2013 press release stating emphatically, "Dearborn is not under sharia law and has never at any time even considered such an action... One unique aspect of our community is the strong working relationship that exists among our diverse faith leaders, who foster understanding and tolerance."

Through an outgrowth of the Greater Detroit Association, Liese has partnered since 2012 with Dave Ferraro, pastor of discipleship at Merriman Road Church in Garden City to spread the Gospel among Muslims in Dearborn.

The two are regularly well-received among Muslims, Liese said, and have even sung Christmas carols to the applause of Muslims gathered at Middle Eastern restaurants where the two frequently dine.

Gospel seed planting

"We set out in hopes of putting together a coalition of like-minded Southern



NO SHARIA HERE —

Southern Baptist pastors say rumors of Dearborn, Mi., which has a high concentration of Arab Americans, being under the control of Sharia law have hampered evangelistic outreach there. Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly has refuted the claim, helping to remind the public that Dearborn is governed by a mayor and seven-member city council elected by a vote of the public. (BP photo courtesy of City of Dearborn)

Baptists, Michigan Southern Baptists, who have a passion to reach Muslims for Christ," Liese said. "We've not seen anybody added to the church, but we've done a lot of seed planting and people have been very, very receptive. Our experience has been nothing but positive."

"People have always been gracious," Liese said. "In all these years that we have been doing this, we have been able to share the Gospel with many people. So many seeds have been sown, and we have never been mistreated or disrespected, ever."

The two men have been invited to the homes and family events of Muslims including weddings, and Muslims have visited the homes and churches of Southern Baptists.

The North American Mission Board has adopted Detroit as a Send City for targeted evangelism and church planting, but the area remains largely unreached for Christ, said Dearborn resident Eli Garza, current pastor of First Spanish Church.

"We are barely hanging on as a denomination in the state," Garza told Baptist Press. "Dearborn is a largely unreached city. There's lots to do here but not only Dearborn, I would say our suburbs as well, even though they're populated by a large number of Anglo-Americans, they are not evangelical."

Rumors of Sharia law in Dearborn only hamper outreach efforts, said Garza, who strives to build relationships with Muslim neighbors. "It's shocking, absolutely shocking how people enjoy the sensational, but don't support the facts."

Garza strives to be a Christian witness among the diversity of Muslims in his immediate neighborhood, shoveling snow and performing other acts of kind-

ness. His next-door neighbor, a Muslim, commends him, Garza said.

"I go out of my way to shovel the sidewalk for them. I'm going to show my respect for them by helping them out," Garza said. "We're making headway."

"Let our good works open doors. Obviously, good works do not present the Gospel, but demonstrates to them that if we say we are followers of... the Messiah, then we'd better behave like it," Garza said. "Even if we just disagree with them in our faith, we're going to love them anyway."

Muslim diversity

Matthew Vroman, pastor of Eastside Community Church in Harper Woods, Mi., served nearly 10 years as a church planter in Turkey. Vroman said the Muslim community in Dearborn is diverse, including Shiite Lebanese, Arab Chaldeans, Albanians, Bangladeshi, and Yemeni.

"Dearborn is full of a community that likes to go to Walmart to shop, loves to eat, wants to educate their kids in their values, and a lot of their values are good. It's not full of a bunch of jihadis who want Sharia law," Vroman told Baptist Press.

"In general, people just want to live there. That's the thing that people don't get, that at the end of the day they are people... They just want to make a living, and they're worried about their kids [and] families."

However, Muslims do want to rear their families with Muslim values, and whether the public images of Muslims in Dearborn mirror their private lives can only be left to speculation, Vroman said.

The leaders, not jihadis, they do want to be able to marry, and bury and di-

vorce and live according to the rules of Islam, and that's true," Vroman said. "They do want their people to live according to Islam... They do want dialogue because they believe in what they hold to. The other thing they want to show is that... there's a peaceful side to the Muslim culture. So many Muslims really want their voice to be heard because they're tired of [it] being said, 'You're a terrorist, you're a terrorist, you're a terrorist.' Everybody looks at you funny. Talk about profiling."

Among Muslim leaders, Imam Mohammad Ali Elahi of Islamic House of Wisdom in Dearborn has spoken frequently and publicly against ISIS and terrorism.

"It's a big lie to call yourselves Islamic State," Elahi said of ISIS at an August 2014 anti-terrorism rally in Dearborn. "You are not Islamic and you are not a state. You are a bunch of gangsters and criminals who choose the tools of torture, intimidation, explosion, theft, and disruption against innocent people."

Elahi promotes Islam as a religion of peace. "There is no such thing as radical Islam," Elahi said in a Jan. 15 CNN interview. "Islam is a religion of reason, a religion of peace, a religion of respect for human rights, a religion of responsibility, and any mentality and any kind of teachings that are against human common sense, against peace, against rationality, against respect for human life and human property and human intellect, and human integrity, it is against Islam and this is why we consider these guys... real enemies of Islam, but unfortunately we don't receive the support from the world in our fight against terrorism. We need to provide more awareness and education to the families themselves."

Pray for Dearborn

Vroman said Southern Baptists who allow fear to inhibit their outreach to Muslims are living in disobedience to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

"I think we need to repent of our walking in fear and not caring about the souls of Muslims, and I think as Baptists we need to get intentional about showing love to Muslims so we can reach them."

"We need to believe what the Bible says and not talk radio. I wish that Christians would befriend Muslims, because they're not the enemy, but we act like they are. Are we an American first or a disciple of Jesus first?" Vroman asked.

Southern Baptists need to pray for evangelistic outreach in Dearborn, pastors told Baptist Press, and should consider funding or physically participating in long-term outreach to the community.

Many have moved to Dearborn and lived among Muslims to reach them for Christ, Liese said. Muslims and Christians are united by our sin problem and need for a Savior, he pointed out.

"The same place that all religions lead to is an attempt to deal with our sin problem. All of us deal with that," he said. "The only difference is we have a Savior who is the Son of God who came, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross as our substitute, rose from the dead bodily, and ascended and is at the right hand of God — and we don't back down on any of that. We believe that. That's Who we worship. That's our Savior Lord Jesus."

One of our fine pastors was telling me about when he was younger, he and his wife were building their first home. And when I say they were building, it was true that they were doing a lot of the work themselves in order to keep costs down and to get into the home. In the process of building, his father-in-law was helping them to build putting the siding on the house. The siding on the house was mainly a tongue and groove, and this young man was working hard to get it done just right. After he had been working for just a short time on a couple of tongue and groove boards he was certainly aware of what a trial this was and after just a few boards he was tired and about at the end of his rope. His father-in-law was watching him as he was working hard getting the knack of putting these boards in place. The son-in-law expressed his exhaustion and wanted to return his frustration at how much more he had to do. His father-in-law said to him, "Don't look at how much more you have left to do, look at what you've already accomplished." The pastor told me that that truth has stuck with him all of his life and that he has passed it on to his children. Don't look at how much you have left to do, look at what you have accomplished. What an amazing moment in his life and how true it is that accomplishment can be a great encouragement.

Now, understand, I'm not talking about just sitting and staring at what you've done and leaning on your achievements and your past accomplishments. No, we press on, encouraged and lifted by the fact that we have accomplished something. I think about David when out there on the battlefield he took on the giant Goliath. Saul and the other troops that were out there questioned whether he could win such a victory, but David pointed out to them the wonder-



The Encouragement of Accomplishment

ful accomplishments in his life. While he was keeping his sheep, a bear came and was going to destroy his sheep and scatter them, but God delivered the bear into his hands. And then he told of a lion that came and how God delivered the lion into his hands and saved his sheep. Then he proclaimed, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (1 Sam. 17:37).

You can almost hear David saying, "Accomplishment is a great encouragement." It was a lesson that Israel could have done well to remember but apparently forgot. Not long after they came across the Red Sea out there on the desert floor moving slowly toward the gift of the Promised Land, they were hungry and the people began to complain that Moses had brought them out there for them to die in the wilderness. With so much further to go and so much to accomplish, they failed to look back

and see what they had already done. Nine plagues had come upon Egypt in their behalf and then the tenth plague, passing of the death angel, and God was doing amazing things. Then when Pharaoh told them to go, there they were stuck at the edge of the Red Sea and God opened the waters and they walked across on dry ground. Ten plagues and an enormous miracle and they were discouraged. The problem was they were looking in the wrong direction and they were staring at what they needed to accomplish, what needed to be done, instead of looking back at all that God had done for them. And they were yet to learn the lesson that accomplishment is a great encouragement.

Maybe life is weighing in on you and it's hard to see how in the world you're ever going to get past all the difficulties or the health issues or the debt or struggles with raising your children and you're about ready to throw up your hands and quit because there obviously

is a lot left to do. Well, just stop right now and look back at what God has done in your life already. Look at what He has accomplished. Look at what you have accomplished and allow accomplishments to be a great encouragement.

When Jesus came to the end of His life in the closing hours of His life, He met with the Father and prayed. John 17 is His High Priestly Prayer and it is not long until the agony of the cross will be upon His back and His heart. But in that prayer, Jesus found this wonderful truth alive and vibrating in His own heart. For in His prayer, He looked at the disciples that He had called and trained and He saw the significance of the transformation of their lives and He prays about them. He talks to the Father about all that He had been through, the challenges that He had faced, the opportunities to serve a glory that had been revealed in Him and He got up from the prayer ready to face the challenges of the cross because accomplishment is a great encouragement.

It is true that none of us have all that we need with us to accomplish what God may have before us, but it is also true that regardless of who you are as you walk with the Lord there are accomplishments that you just ought to stop and look at because when we see what God has done in you, we are amazed at who you have become and what you have done. So you stop and look at it also. Allow God to stir your heart and remind you that your accomplishments are a source of great encouragement even to yourself. So face the future with an eye on the wonder of what God has already enabled you to do and knowing without a doubt that He will not leave you nor forsake you and what is ahead will become even greater accomplishments.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Just for the Record



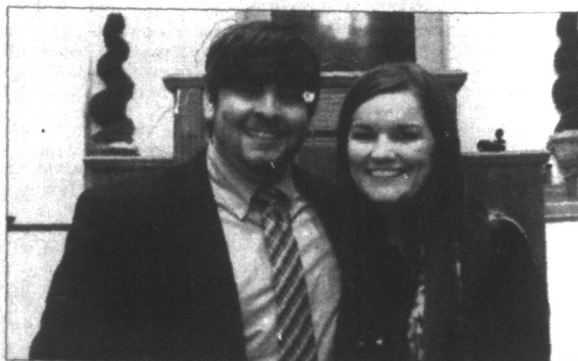
HEUCKS RETREAT CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, presented Sue Lea with a personalized crystal vase filled with flowers to commemorate her 39 years as pianist. She is shown with pastor Ken Parvin.

FREDONIA CHURCH, NEW ALBANY, ordained Cody Matlock to the gospel ministry Feb. 22. He is shown with his wife, Beth.



The Children in Action of **HOPE CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,** collected \$343.26 for a missions activity.

TEMPLE CHURCH, MYRTLE, ordained Micheal Canerdy and Scott Hancock as deacons. Shown are Mike Canerdy, Canerdy, pastor Donnie Schuman, Hancock, Alan Hancock, and Charles Rodgers.



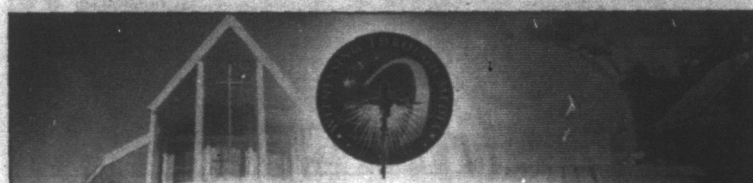
What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

March 5, 2015

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.




WORKSHOPS

MARCH 20-21, 2015 | BROADMOOR BAPTIST CHURCH, MADISON

Let me urge you to make plans to be at the
Annual Witnessing Through Media Banquet and Workshop
to be held March 20-21, 2015,
at Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison, Miss.

Register online today. Deadline is March 6, 2015



TODD STARNES
Award-winning host of the FOX News & Commentary, Todd Starnes, will be this year's Witnessing Through Media Awards Banquet speaker on March 20, 2015, at Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison, Mississippi. On Saturday, March 21, 2015, workshops in all areas of media ministry will be held. Check out the 2015 Witnessing Through Media Newsletter.

For more information contact Communication Services, MBCB, at 800-748-1651, Ext. 378, or 601-292-3378;
E-mail: jchen@mbcb.org



CHURCH BUILDING CONFERENCE

March 17, 2015
Baptist Building, Skyroom | 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
For more information contact the
Pastor/Leadership Development Dept.
at 601-292-3305.

MISSISSIPPI BLACK CHURCH

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2015

July 16-18, 2015
Morrison Heights
Baptist Church
Clinton, MS

To register call:
Mission Strategy Dept., (800) 748.1651, Ext. 231,
or (601) 292.3231

Registration:
\$50 after February 15, 2015
www.mbc.org/events

Ministry From the Heart... **BOLD** DISCIPLE

Encourage your church librarian to get away from it all and join other librarians at the Church Library Ministry Retreat.

**"Ministry From the Heart...
Building Blocks of a Bold Disciple"**

March 27-28, 2015

**Garaywa Camp and Conference Center,
Clinton, Miss.**

Registration deadline is: **March 13, 2015.** Check out our Web for details and registration.

Link:

<http://www.mbc.org/businessservices/communication-services/church-library-ministry/>

For more information contact Communication Services at the MBCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 378, or 601-292-3378, or E-mail at jchen@mbcb.org.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTRY ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE

SERVING ONE ANOTHER

MARCH 23-24, 2015

GARAYWA CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER, CLINTON

To view registration form, go to www.mbc.org/church-growth/pastor-leadership-development
For more information contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept. of the MBCB at 601-292-3305 or E-mail cwtaylor@mbcb.org.

PREACHING 2015 CONFERENCE

BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE • April 20

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY • April 21

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE • April 22

FEATURED PRESENTERS: Daniel Caldwell, Ronald Meeks, Wayne VanHorn, Steve Stone

For registration and more information contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept. at 800-748-1651, Ext. 305, 601-292-3305, E-mail cwtaylor@mbcb.org

KIDS CAMP 2015

CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST RETREAT, WEST, MS

ENJOY WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY ALONG WITH HORSEBACK RIDING, A ROPES COURSE, THE LAKE, AND SO MUCH MORE!

AGES: SECOND TO SIXTH GRADES (COMPLETED)

DATES:

Session 1: June 15-17

Session 2: June 18-20

Session 3: June 22-24

COST PER CAMPER AND COUNSELOR IS \$160

Sponsored by the Sunday School Dept., MBCB
800-748-1651, ext. 291, cday@mbcb.org



Mother Daughter OVERNIGHT

Mother/Daughter is on April 10-11, 2015, at Garaywa Camp & Conference Center. We will begin at 5 p.m. on Friday and end at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday. You will be involved in events such as a missionary visit, worship, ropes course, crafts and much more. This is the perfect opportunity to get away from the world and invest in a 1st-6th grade girl in your life.

Registration forms are online at garaywa.org.

Cost= \$50 per person

Please call Garaywa Camp & Conference Center at 601-924-7034 for more information.

OASIS 2015

Missions Leaders

Looking for your next missions project? Well, we hope you will consider the OASIS 2015 Project. On October 22-26, 2015, a retreat for single career missionaries will take place in Malaysia. The purpose of the retreat is to provide opportunities for worship, fellowship, and encouragement. More than 85% of the single missionaries serving in this area of the world are women. Since our missionaries attend this retreat at their own expense, we want to say "thank you" to them for their service by sponsoring their participation in the retreat this year. The cost per person is \$900 and this includes all their expenses. All donors will be provided the name (or initials) of a missionary so you can pray for them during the retreat. **The DEADLINE to participate is April 2, 2015.** Because of the logistics of this event (plane tickets, etc. ...) an early deadline had to be set. Thank you for understanding!

We hope that you will prayerfully lead your group or church to help sponsor a missionary to attend this year's OASIS event. This is an opportunity for us to remind these singles that they have not been forgotten and that we are indeed holding the ropes for them. For more information contact **Ken Rhodes, Director of Missions Mobilization for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**, at krhodes@mbcb.org, or 800-748-1651, Ext. 398. Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Mail donations to:
Missions Mobilization
OASIS 2015
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205

MISSISSIPPI MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP



Saturday, April 18, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, Clinton, MS



MISSISSIPPI MISSIONARY PARENTS FELLOWSHIP

Friday-Saturday, April 17-18, 2015
2:00 p.m. Friday - 12:30 p.m. Saturday
Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, Clinton, MS

For registration and more information contact Paula Smith - 601-292-3336, E-mail psmith@mbcb.org.

SPRING AREA SENIOR RALLIES

Tuesday, March 10
FBC, Columbia

Tuesday, April 7
FBC, Philadelphia

Thursday, March 19
FBC, Winona

Thursday, April 9
FBC, Brookhaven

Monday, March 23
FBC, Tupelo

Thursday, March 26
FBC, VanCleave

SENIOR ADULT DAY RETREATS

Emmanuel BC, Grenada
Tuesday, May 19

Salem Heights BC, Laurel
Thursday, May 21

FBC, Natchez
Tuesday, May 26

For more information contact the Discipleship/Family Ministry Dept. of the MBCB at 601-292-3284, E-mail dbrashier@mbcb.org

SUMMER CAMP 2015 GARAYWA

REGISTRATION FOR CAMP 2015 IS OPEN!
YOU MAY VISIT

WWW.GARAYWA.ORG TO REGISTER ONLINE
OR DOWNLOAD THE APPROPRIATE FORMS.

JUNE 8-12, JUNE 15-19, JUNE 22-26, JULY 6-10,
JULY 13-17, AND JULY 20-24

GIRL'S CAMP FOR GAS AND ALL GIRLS GRADES 3RD-6TH

JUNE 22-26 AND JULY 6-10

STUDENTS CAMP FOR ACTEENS AND ALL GIRLS GRADES 7TH-12TH

JUNE 29, JUNE 30, AND JULY 1

DAY CAMP FOR BOYS AND GIRLS GRADES 1ST-6TH

PLEASE CONTACT GARAYWA CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER
AT 601-924-7034 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

Pray this day for...

March 6 - 19, 2015

"Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples.." Psalm 105:1 (ESV)

Pray for: **John & Melinda Kyzar**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through personalization, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination & evangelism.

Pray for: **Asbury & Jeannie Martin**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert & Janice Mooney**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **John & Sarah Perkins**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through mission support, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Sarah Prewitt**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Eugenia & Tracy Putnam**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Steven & Nickolee Roberts**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Steven & Ruth Roberts**, missionaries ministering to Southeast Asian Peoples through financial administration, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **C. & Marleen Robinson**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

DINNER

THURSDAY | MARCH 19 | 6:30 P.M.

Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church, Meridian

PASTORS, STAFF, CHAIRMAN OF DEACONS,
FINANCIAL/BUDGET CHAIRMEN AND SPOUSES

DR. FUTRAL, SPEAKER

NO COST, BUT YOU MUST RSVP TO LISA LEAVELL IN THE
CP/STEWARDSHIP DEPT. AT 601-292-3347
OR LLEAVELL@mbcb.org BY MONDAY, MARCH 17.

LIFE COMMITMENT SUNDAY

APRIL 12, 2015

Life Commitment Sunday - a day to focus attention on the
calling to vocational ministry.

For more information visit us at:

www.mbc.org/church-growth/pastor-leadership-development-ministries

OR contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept. at
800-748-1651, Ext. 305, 601-292-3305, or E-mail at
cwtaylor@mbcb.org

5-1-08
MISS TAYLOR DEWETT
Parents: Ted & Kerri
American Peoples

5-1-08
MISS KAMRYN DEWETT
Parents: Ted & Kerri
American Peoples

5-2-08
MR. CALEB S.
Parents: J & C
Restricted

5-3-99
MISS ADRIANN S.
Parents: Jerry & Kelly
Restricted

05-14-99
MR. JACKSON HOLEMAN
Parents: Jeff & Liesa
South America

05-15-09
MR. JUDSON N
Parents: Kieth & Susan
(Kieth is spelled correctly)
Restricted

5-15-98
MR. PATRICK AUSTIN
Parents: Arnold & Susie
American Peoples Group

5-16-00
MISS ADDIE GRACE PUTNAM
Parents: Tracy & Genie
European Peoples

5-16-98
MR. MICAH PEACOCK
Parents: Kevin & Brenda
American Peoples

05-18-11
MISS ALANA
Parents: J & M
Restricted

5-23-01
MISS ANNA CLAIRE
Parents: J & P
Restricted

5-23-01
MR. J.D.
Parents: D & L
Restricted



5-24-11
MISS SARAH S.
Parents: J & C
Restricted

5-26-08
MISS DARCY D.
Parents: D & M
European Peoples

5-26-10
MR. CRUZ WHITE
Parents: David & Regina
American Peoples

05-29-03
MR. C. S.
Parents: S & M
Last Frontier

FROM APRIL - 4-35-07
MISS ELIZABETH JOHNSON
Parents: Lew & Brandi
Sub-Saharan African People

Encourage an MK with a card!



FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to:
MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards
together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU.
Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a
package to MS WMU.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents
may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

HOUSE TOPS

DON'T FORGET!

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 8. Set your clock ahead one hour before going to sleep Saturday night.



Ministry Security & Safety Workshop!

What would you do?

- A person shows up at church with a gun
- A person becomes seriously ill during service
- A non-custodial parent takes their child from the classroom

Are you prepared?

James Greene & Associates and Brotherhood Mutual Insurance are excited to provide this training event to help churches be prepared. This one day workshop will help churches recognize signs of crisis, protect ministries, develop a safety plan and much more. Limited seating is available.

When & Where: **Thursday, March 26, 2015**

Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison, MS 39110

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:15 PM (lunch provided)

Cost: \$99 per person (use offer code **BBCMSCMAR15** when you register) Reg price \$149

Register Online: <http://www.CPPS.com/training/1>

QUESTIONS? Call Esther @ 1 (800) 422-3384 ext 129



"Hearing is Believing"

For a **FREE** consultation call Jackson 1-800-844-1200 or Hattiesburg 1-800-844-5821 or go online at www.audioservices.org

Professional Sound System Design and Installation Church / School / Commercial



CORINTH, MS - WHEELER GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

21 County Road 519 • Corinth, MS 38834 • (662) 287-2864 • web: wheelergrovebaptist.com

Speakers



Schedule

WEDNESDAY - MARCH - 18TH 2015

6:30 pm Collingsworth Family Full Concert

THURSDAY - MARCH - 19TH 2015

10:00 am Bailey Smith, Kara Blackard

1:45 pm Gerald Harris, Steve Hale

6:30 pm Jr. Hill, David Jeremiah

FRIDAY - MARCH - 20TH 2015

10:00 am Mike Stone, Paul Blair

1:45 pm Josh Smith, Steve Smith, Bob Pitman

6:30 pm Paige Patterson, Colonel Oliver North

Music



Hotels

Hampton Inn - 662-286-5949 • Holiday Inn Express - 662-287-1407 • Quality Inn - 662-287-4421

March 18-20, 2015

Real Evangelism Bible Conf. slated March 18-20 in Corinth

CORINTH, Ms. (Special) - Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, will host the 2015 Bailey Smith Real Evangelism Bible Conference March 18-20 at the church's facilities at 21

County Line Road 519. Meals will be provided at no cost for lunch and supper on March 19 and March 20. "Everyone is invited," said Kara Blackard, pastor of Wheeler

Grove Church. For more information, contact the church at (662) 287-2864. E-mail: office@wheelergrovebaptist.com. Web site: wheelergrovebaptist.com.

Open letter to U.S. President Barack Obama

March 2, 2015

Dear President Obama:

Since ISIS is a continuing threat to world peace in a way unknown to us since the Nazis of World War II, we humbly call upon you to use the influence and power of your distinguished office to take the necessary actions now in this urgent hour to bring an end to these human atrocities. The abuse, brutalization, and murder of children, women, and men that is occurring before the world calls our country to lead forward to bring this to an end.

As you do this, please know that we are not only praying for you, but assure you that you will have the unequivocal support of the vast majority of America's largest, and some say most multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, Protestant denomination in America. The world will applaud your courage and compassion as you defend those that Scripture calls, "the least of these."

Mr. President, just as Esther led forward for the deliverance of the Jews in her day, we believe you also "have come to the kingdom for such a time as this." You have been given an historical moment to lead in protecting the people and the principle of religious freedom in the world. We are praying for you to have wisdom and courage in this hour.

These former presidents of our Convention join me, the current President of the Southern Baptist Convention, in making this humble, but urgent appeal to you.

Sincerely and Prayerfully,

Ronnie Floyd, President
Southern Baptist Convention
Bailey E. Smith, 1980-82
James T. Draper, Jr., 1982-84
Charles F. Stanley, 1984-86
Jerry Vines, 1988-90
Morris H. Chapman, 1990-92
H. Edwin Young, Sr., 1992-94
James B. Henry, 1994-96

Tom Elliff, 1996-98
Paige Patterson, 1998-2000
James Merritt, 2000-02
Jack Graham, 2002-04
Bobby Welch, 2004-06
Frank S. Page, 2006-08
Johnny M. Hunt, 2008-10
Bryant Wright, 2010-12
Fred Luter, 2012-14

ISIS

cont. from p. 1

Southern Baptists "need to stand for the children, the women, and the men who are being brutalized and abused and murdered globally, all in the name of religion," said Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas in his first term as SBC president. "We need to champion, as Southern Baptists, religious liberty globally."

He noted Southern Baptists also must never compromise their No. 1 goal to "penetrate and push back the lostness in this world." Floyd urged Executive Committee members to call on their churches "to join in this valiant effort of deep prayer for men and women and children who are being abused and murdered in all kinds of ways."

In the open letter to the president, Floyd told Obama that Southern Baptists are praying for him.

"Mr. President, just as Esther led forward for the deliverance of the Jews in her day, we believe you also 'have come to the kingdom for such a time as this.' You have been given an historical moment to lead in protecting the people and the principle of religious freedom in the world."

"We are praying for you to have wisdom and courage in this hour."

MS POSITIONS

BUCATUNNA BAPTIST CHURCH IN CLARKE COUNTY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR EITHER BI-VOCATIONAL OR FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please send resumes to: 10806 CR514, Meridian, MS 39301

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, IS CURRENTLY SEEKING A PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PERSON (CHURCH SECRETARY). If interested, please send resume to Union Baptist Church, 159 Highway 514, Meridian, Mississippi.

STRONG RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH IN PINOLA, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resumes to Gene Farmer at 209 Katie Bush Rd Pinola, MS 39149

TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH. Send resumes to: 807 China Grove Road, Jayess, MS 39641 or brodale54@bellsouth.net.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, A SMALL COUNTRY CHURCH BETWEEN DREW AND RULEVILLE, MISS. IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. 11 April 2015. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 249, Drew, Miss. 38737.

LAKE HARBOR BAPTIST CHURCH IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A PIANO PLAYER AND A MUSIC DIRECTOR. Please send resumes to: Lake Harbor Baptist Church %Personnel Committee P. O. Box 339, Sandhill, Ms 39161 or email resumes to susi.moore@gmail.com

CLASSIFIEDS

WWW.SMOKYMOUNTAINSTORE.COM. Shop 24/7 for all your Smokies Goodies...Honeys, Sorghum, Jams (locally produced). Immediate shipment of your products! Free Shipping Available! Christian owned and operated!

PROFESSIONAL HOUSECLEANING AS NEEDED; PET FRIENDLY; I'M HIGHLY RECOMMENDED; 601-983-8697.

PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER First Baptist Church of Red Bay, Alabama is seeking a Part-Time Music Minister. Send resume to: First Baptist Church, c/o: Music Minister Search Committee, P.O. Box 616, Red Bay, AL 35582, (256) 356-9505

GATLINBURG RENTALS: Cabin \$95/night and Condo \$75/night. Contact: 832 922 0401 or E-mail: pdw4760@att.net for information and booking.

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: Gulf Shores & Orange Beach, AL. Rent direct from Christian Family Owners, lowest prices on the Beach. www.gulfshorescondos.com, 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231, 251-752-2366.

STAINED GLASS: new windows and repairs. Hopper Stained Glass, Jackson, 601-502-0202.

STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC., serving MS & AL since 1992. Call 800-605-2970

FOR SALE - 2004 GMC 33 PASSENGER DIESEL BUS, Less than 39K miles, \$35K obo. Call 601-992-0345.

GET THE BEST RATES ON: Health Insurance and Medicare Supplements. Call 1-800-541-8196 or visit www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com

NORRIS BOOKBINDING COMPANY, INC., OLD BIBLES REBOUND. Also, church bulletins and hymnals. For more information call 662-453-7424 or fax us at 662-455-6743.

CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE ESTIMATES. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone 601-776-6617.

WINDOW AND SCREEN SHOP - windows and storm windows built to fit your opening. Plus new window screens and rescreen old screens. Call Tom Cook 601-709-4879.

WWW.SEBRENHOMEIMPROVEMENT.COM. Christian owned Don & Rita Sebrén. 601-992-2092. All home improvements, siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

THE BaptistRecord

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing: no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

\$5,000

Final Expense Bureau

Insurance Policies

FOR ONLY PENNIES A DAY

Guaranteed Issue

Even if you have been turned

down before.

We will issue you a policy up to
age 85

L.D. O'Mire

1-(800)-844-3254

CD or IRA

COMING DUE?

15%

First Year

GUARANTEED

* Includes First Year 8% Bonus

Learn the Safe & Secure Way to Earn Stock
Market Linked Return Without Market
Risk to Your Principal.

L.D. O'Mire
Financial Services
1-800-844-3254

Serving you for Over 30 Years



B i B L i O C i P H E R

KOTMA TDC RATMA YA JSEQZREZAC

SDQF NFS QBOFSKB QBA IDFGGEACKA

FX KFC, TDC FX LAWSW FSO EFOC.

WAMFDC RAQAO FDA:QGF

Clue: K=G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 4:36

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Everyone Accountable • Zephaniah 1:1-11

One could easily read Zephaniah's word and think, "He sounds like an old fashion fire and brimstone evangelist!" Indeed Zephaniah does not mince with words. He is straight forward with the declaration of the judgment of the Lord upon the people of the land, godly and ungodly alike, because of the rampant growth of pagan worship, and the disregard of the Lord God.

Judgment Encompasses Everyone (Zephaniah 1:1-3)

"I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land, says the Lord (Zeph. 1:2 NKJV)

Zephaniah was the great, great grandson of King Hezekiah. Josiah the king was the great grandson of King Hezekiah. Josiah was the king who was instrumental in religious reform. Zephaniah was one generation prior to Josiah. Zephaniah was prophesying the message of God that would eventually be heard and followed by the generation of Josiah. Zephaniah warned of the impending judgment of God that would come through the hands of their enemies.

Zephaniah understood the judgment of God was coming and sounded warning. Most people in most cultures also understand that judgment is coming, but think it is not happening in their generation. How blindly we try to rationalize and bargain with God. There is no compromise with truth. There is no compromise with the judgment of God.

The Danger of Spiritual Compromise (Zephaniah 1:4-6)

"I will stretch out My hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place..." (Zephaniah 1:4 NKJV)

Does God say He will stretch out His hand against His own people? Indeed He does. They were guilty of spiritual

compromise all idolatrous priests, pagan priests who worship and swear oaths by the Lord. (v. 4-5)

He further stated they had turned from following God and no longer had been seeking after God.

Does this not sound familiar? Does this not sound like the dilemma of today's church? Are we not seeking comfort more than character? Have we not "tolerated" so much that we have little to stand on? Are we not standing in the possibility of God's judgment? It is only the grace and mercy of God calling hearts to repentance that can change our culture.



Explore the Bible

with Kiely D. Young

A Day of Reckoning is Coming (Zephaniah 1:7-11)

"Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand." (Zeph. 1:7 NKJV)

Zephaniah becomes an unpopular prophet with these words. The people wanted to hear that judgment was coming upon their enemies, not upon Israel. They wanted to hear about salvation of Israel, not doom and gloom. But because the religious leaders of Zephaniah's day did the opposite of what God expected of them, God promised all would be

punished, including the Israelites. The sound of the mournful cry would come from all regions of Jerusalem including the regions of the people of God. From The Temple, to the market place, religious leaders and business leaders all would be judged for their corruption and disregard of God.

Scripture clearly teaches there are "none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10 NKJV)

God says "all have sinned and come

short of the glory of God". (Romans 3:23 NKJV)

God further says "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23 NKJV)

Zephaniah was warning the Israelites of impending judgment if they did repent and turn to God alone by obeying His truth.

God tells us through Roman 10:9-10 there is hope today to all who repent and place their faith in Christ alone "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

God does not compromise with sin. He dealt with sin with the Israelites and He dealt with sin for all mankind at Calvary and the empty tomb.

Jesus is the only way to eternal life. Many today express this is a very narrow-minded approach to religion. That is because they want to bargain with God. God makes His plan very clear, so clear that He sent His only Son to pay the price. There is no other way.

Young is retired Sunday School Director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and a member of Ridgcrest Church, Madison.

A Birth Like No Other • Luke 1:26-35

Jesus, the One prophesied like no other, was brought into this world through the miracle of a birth like no other. Hallmark® was not the first to care enough to send the very best. God sent Jesus to Earth through a never to be duplicated, totally unique, one of a kind, extra-special delivery. Poetically, I love saying it this way, "Peace on Earth. Good will. Good news. God is wearing baby shoes."

Somewhat, God sent...Himself!!!

As we study our gospel of Luke scripture passage for this week, we discover that the official birth announcement was delivered directly from Heaven to the town of Nazareth in Galilee. God's personal angel named Gabriel was dispatched to deliver God's personal message. A young Jewish girl named Mary was the recipient of this shockingly joyful news. At the time, Mary, the mother-to-be of Jesus, was a virgin engaged (and culturally considered already married) to a man named Joseph, from the tribe of Judah.

Chapter one of the gospel according to Matthew tells us that Joseph, Mary's husband, kept her a virgin until she gave birth to her Son. An unnamed "angel of the Lord" came to Joseph in a dream to assure him of God's involvement in the details of Mary's totally unexpected pregnancy. Together, as their God-sent

angels had instructed, they would give Mary's Son the name Jesus.

By the way, if anyone tells you that they totally understand this event and claims that they can explain it to you, RUN! I will never fully comprehend it, but I completely and totally believe it. The birth of Jesus was a God thing. Our belief in the virgin birth of Jesus is as vital as our belief in the vicarious death of Jesus and the victorious resurrection of Jesus.

The prophet Isaiah who spoke of

the coming of The Suffering Servant in our study from last week also recorded specific prophecy concerning this virgin

birth. In Isaiah 7:14, we learn that one day a virgin would conceive and bear a Son Who would be called Immanuel: God with us. Some seven hundred years (and nine miraculous months) later, God delivered on that prophecy in a manger in Bethlehem. In total amazement, Mary and Joseph told the Roman census

takers to add one newborn member to their Judean household registry.

Additionally, Isaiah proclaims in chapter nine that this coming One would shine forth as light out of darkness from the tribal lands of Zebulun and Naphtali which comprised the land area called Galilee. Nazareth, home of Joseph's carpenter shop, is located in Galilee. Isaiah reveals that this child will be a Son whose name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. Wonder if dear old Isaiah

might have awakened with a grin at the cries that came from the Bethlehem manger and then settled again in his grave to wait for all remaining prophecy of God to be fulfilled to the letter.

This unprecedented birth fulfilled yet another major prophecy. Through writers inspired by The Holy Spirit, God promised that Jesus would be born through the line of the house of David of the tribe of Judah, son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of

Abraham. In Jesus, our covenant-making God was at work fulfilling His promises. Rejoice and be amazed! Mary's Little Lamb was also the Lion of the line of Judah, divinely human and humanly divine.

The enduring "house" promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7 was now fully established in Jesus as an eternal kingdom. David's response to this mighty future promise of God mirrors the response of Mary to the birth announcement in Nazareth. In humility, King David offered himself as a servant to The Lord of the House. Mary rendered the same answer to her Lord. "Behold, here am I, your bondservant. Be it done unto me according to Your word." Gabriel, you can return THAT response to your Sender.

David reigned as king of Israel approximately three hundred years BEFORE the days of the ministry of Isaiah. Mary gave birth to Jesus about a thousand years AFTER David ruled. Presently, over two thousand years have passed since the birth of Jesus. Days, times and people may be different, but our response to Jesus should be the same. For those who are willing to faithfully serve Him, Jesus promises a miraculous, spiritual, new birth like no other.

Brown is staff evangelist, First Church, Richland.

LIFEWAY

cont. from p. 1

LifeWay, the publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Con-

vention, has analyzed "more than a dozen offers to purchase our property in downtown Nashville" and had eliminated several of the offers during the week of Feb. 17, King said.

King said LifeWay anticipates "a final decision in a few weeks, as we continue to seek the arrangement that provides the best stewardship of the resources with which LifeWay has

been entrusted for more than 100 years."

LifeWay's downtown campus includes nine buildings with more than one million square feet of office, warehouse,

and parking space. About 1,100 of LifeWay's employees work in the downtown offices. The organization also oversees 186 Christian bookstores and 4,300 employees in 29 states.

Platt, IMB trustees plot new direction for SBC entity

HOUSTON (BP) — International Mission Board (IMB) President David Platt proposed streamlining the mission agency's strategy and structure in keeping with his desire for IMB to exalt Christ and work more effectively toward accomplishing the Great Commission, during IMB's Feb. 24-25 trustee meeting in Houston.

Trustees unanimously voted to approve the plan.

"We want to empower limitless missionary teams to make disciples and multiply churches among unreached people," Platt said. "We need a strategy that doesn't cap our number of missionaries merely based upon how much money we have."

Platt noted the IMB operated "in the red" last year, with the agency's operating expenses exceeding income by nearly \$21 million.

"Right now our funnel is really small... such that we're turning people away," Platt said, "and what I'm saying, what we know, is that we need to blow open this funnel and create as many pathways as possible for Christians and churches to get the Gospel to unreached people."

IMB must creatively consider how to leverage the avenue God has given for limitless men, women, and families to join together on missionary teams to make disciples and multiply churches among unreached people groups, Platt said.

Since his election in August 2014, Platt has stated his five biblically-based desires for IMB are to exalt Christ, mobilize Christians, equip the church, facilitate church planting, and play its part in completing the Great Commission.

As a result of these desires, Platt recommended to IMB trustees a "reset" of the agency's strategy, and realignment of its structure, to focus on five main areas:

■ **Global Training**, led by Zane Pratt, who was named vice president of global training during the November 2014 trustee meeting.

■ **Global Engagement**, which entails work formerly called "global strategy," to be led by John Brady. Trustees elected Brady, current vice president for global strategy, as vice president of global engagement.

■ Operations and Finance, which consolidates the current offices of personnel, logistics, and finance into one team. Trustees affirmed the search for a person to lead the newly formed operations and finance work.

Randy Pegues, vice president of global logistics support; Tom Williams, vice president of global personnel; and David Stevenson, vice president of finance; will step out of their current positions and into other assignments to be determined in the days ahead.

"In the meantime, they will continue to function in their

current roles," Platt said, and Stevenson will continue his chief financial officer responsibility.

■ **Mobilization**, which "re-envision[s]" the current Church and Partner Services team to more effectively mobilize Christians and churches for global mission, to be led by a to-be-named vice president of mobilization.

Ken Winter, vice president of church and partner services, plans to return to work in a local church.

■ **Strategy**, which over-arches all the areas with a "relentless" focus to unify IMB culture. As a result, the current Office of Global Strategic Mobilization, currently led by Scott Holste, will fold into the new strategy in various ways.

Some areas will move under Global Engagement. Other areas will report directly to Platt and Sebastian Traeger, IMB executive vice president. Holste will work in one of these areas.

The current Office of Prayer, led by Gordon Fort, will be "infused across this entire strategy," Platt said. Fort, who has served as senior vice president of prayer mobilization and training, will work alongside Platt and Traeger to help fuel the overall strategy with a focus on relating to key IMB partners and constituents.

Clyde Meador, executive advisor to the president, noted IMB has gone through many minor and major "resets" in its history to adjust to changing needs. Each "recalibration" of the organization "has been used by God" to advance His church, Meador said.

While changes can be difficult and painful, they are necessary for the survival of any organization, he added.

Platt said the changes are intended to be reproducible through the IMB's national partners around the world — making disciples among unreached people and seeing churches established, then seeing those churches, in turn, send Christians to unreached people, training them and supporting them as they engage the world with the Gospel.

"We want to fuel movement like this all over the world," Platt said, "but let me be clear. Strategy and structure are not the ultimate answer to seeing Christians and churches engaging unreached people with the Gospel.... What that means is that more than we need a streamlined strategy, or a simplified structure, we need the power of God to do what only He can do.

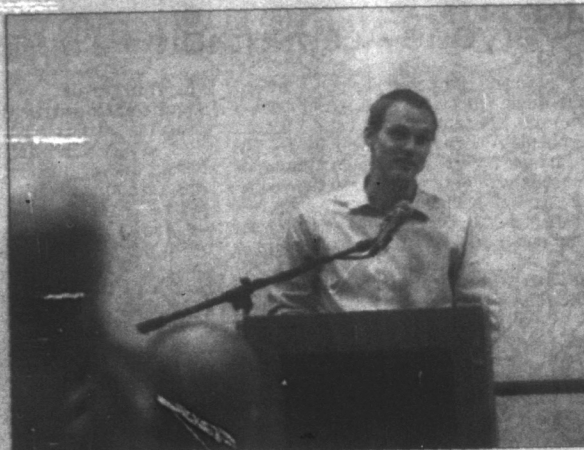
"This is why I am calling everyone across our IMB family, from trustees to personnel or otherwise, to fast and pray because only God can do this work... Let's get down on our knees, then get up from our knees and do whatever it takes, no matter what that means, to set the sails for God to empower

limitless missionary teams who are making disciples and multiplying churches among unreached people for the glory of His name."

The impending changes are not about IMB employees or trustees in specific roles, but about the billions of people who die without a relationship with Jesus-Christ, Stevenson noted during his finance report.

"I'm confident that my colleagues on staff and our missionaries around the world are also single-mindedly focused on this reality. We must find ways to get the Gospel to more and more people," Stevenson said.

"Any change that facilitates that reality and moves us forward in our task is something we must do. I'm committed to doing all that I can, in whatever small way, to make it a reality that there is a multitude from every language, people, tribe, and nation knowing and worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. May it be so for all of us."



RESETTING — International Mission Board President David Platt addresses the agency's trustees with a proposal "to reset our strategy and realign our structure so that as we ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His field, we will be ready when He does." Trustees unanimously approved the proposal during their Feb. 24-25 meeting in Houston. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

NORTH AMERICA

**MARCH
1-8**

ANNIE ARMSTRONG

EASTER OFFERING

NATIONAL GOAL: \$60 MILLION

ANNIEARMSTRONG.COM